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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/892,959	06/27/2001	Kevin R. Keegan	DP-303212	3825

7590

07/03/2003

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EXAMINER

MAPLES, JOHN S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1745

DATE MAILED: 07/03/2003

4

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/892,959

Applicant(s)

KEEGAN, KEVIN R.

Examiner

John S. Maples

Art Unit

1745

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 and 10-26 ~~is~~/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 21-26 ~~is~~/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 10-20 ~~is~~/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

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1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-8, 10-20, drawn to an electrode fluid distributor, classified in class 429, subclass 39.
 - II. Claims 21-22, drawn to a method of moving gas in a fuel cell, classified in class 429, subclass 34.
 - III. Claims 23-26, drawn to a method of operating a fuel cell, classified in class 429, subclass 13.
2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons: none of the two method groups II or III require the particulars of the distributor of Group I, i.e., the methods of both Groups II and III could be used without the plurality of segment pairs as taught in Group I. Group II includes the steps of passing a portion of a gas to an electrode and then passing the remainder of the gas between a wall and a separator. The Group III method does not include such as step for gas in a fuel cell.
3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their different classification and recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
4. During a telephone conversation with Pam Curbelo on April 15, 2003 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-20. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 21-26 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.
5. It is noted that applicant did not file a claim 9 in this application.

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6. Figures 1 and 2 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

7. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8. Claims 13-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 13, line 10, there is no antecedent basis for the work "interconnect". Claims 14-20, dependent on claim 13, fall therewith.

9. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

10. Claims 1, 8, 10-13, 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by

Butler-US 6,251,308. (Butler) (new art of 27)

See Figure 1 of Butler along with column 2, lines 13-22 and column 7, lines 19-42. In

Figure 1 of Butler, there are three areas in the plate 10 that depict the inlet and outlet segments.

Fun!
Keep!
yes!

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They are the segments on either side of the single baffles at the top of the triangular formed figures near the bottom of the plate 10 as seen in Figure 1.

11. Claims 1, 8 and 10-12²⁷ are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Zeng-US 6,461,754. (Zeng) (NEW REFE²⁷)

Reference is made to Figures 1 and 2 of Zeng along with column 3, line 44 through column 4, line 29 which teach fluid segments in a fuel cell.

12. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

13. Claims 1-8, 10-20 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 2-16, 18 and 25-29 of copending Application No. 09/747,752. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the instant application recites the baffle extending from the separator toward the first electrode, which limitation is not part of the 09/747,752 claimed subject matter. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in this art to have extended the baffle in the 09/747,752 structure so that a higher efficiency of air flow would have been achieved in the distributor therein.

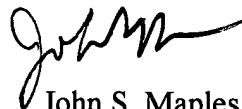
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This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John S. Maples whose telephone number is 703-308-1795. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 6:15-3:45.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached on 703-308-2383. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310 for regular communications and 703-872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.



John S. Maples
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1745

JSM
June 30, 2003